

USDA/Rural Development

101 South Main, Suite 102 • Temple, Texas • e-mail: Scooter.Brockette@tx.usda.gov
voice: 254-742-9711 • fax: 254-742-9709 • TDD: 254-742-9712 - Web Site: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/tx/>

News Release

TX- 32.03

For More Information Contact:
Scooter Brockette

FAIR HOUSING MONTH

Temple, Texas, April 11, 2003--Bryan Daniel, State Director, Texas USDA Rural Development announces the celebration of the 35th anniversary of the Fair Housing Act prohibiting the discrimination in financing, renting, or selling of any dwelling.

"Since that milestone in civil rights history, tremendous growth in homeownership has swept through the United States," said Daniel. "As we celebrate this milestone, we must also reaffirm our commitment to fair access to housing for all rural Texans."

Along with eliminating housing discrimination it is also important to commit our resources to help more families realize their dream of homeownership. Homeownership is freedom, it is a catalyst for pride and self esteem, it helps to stabilize local neighborhoods and brings economic security to families.

In order to support minority homeownership, President Bush has challenged Federal, state, and local governments, along with other public and private organizations to reach the goal of increasing minority homeowners by 5.5 million by 2010. By achieving this goal, we will not only be able to strengthen our communities in Texas but our national economy as well.

To assist in reaching the President's goal, USDA Rural Development unveiled in October 2002 a Five-Star Commitment Plan to expand rural minority homeownership in Texas by (1) lowering fees to reduce barriers to minority homeownership, (2) doubling the number of self-help housing participants by 2010, (3) increasing participation by minority lenders, (4) promoting credit counseling and homeownership education, and (5) monitoring lending activities to ensure a increase in minority homeownership.

Texas has established performance measurements to help fulfill USDA Rural Development Five Star Commitment Plan. The plan will work with existing Self-Help Housing grantees as well as new organizations to double the number of Self-Help Housing providers and units. The agency will monitor and work with participating lenders to ensure that fees incurred by borrowers are reasonable. Plans also include assisting homebuyers by making homeownership counseling and education opportunities more readily available. In addition, the agency will assist minority lenders in increasing loan activity.

For more information on USDA Rural Development programs in Texas, check our web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/tx/>.

USDA Rural Development is an Equal Opportunity Lender, Provider, and Employer. Complaints of discrimination should be sent to: USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410.

###

The USDA Rural Development mission area was created in 1994 and includes the Rural Business-Cooperative Service, the Rural Housing Service, and the Rural Utilities Service. Its mission is to use the resources of USDA to provide an improved quality of life for the nation's 53 million rural people.

